

# Cattle Producer Update



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD & AGRICULTURE

July 2002

## Enhancing Communication with Producers

The *Cattle Producer Update* is intended to give producers current information about California's on-going bovine TB investigation. For more comprehensive information, contact the CDFA Headquarters Office at (916) 654-1447, a CDFA field office (see next page) or check our web page at [www.cdfa.ca.gov](http://www.cdfa.ca.gov).

## Current Status

California currently has one dairy herd affected with bovine TB. More than 26,000 cattle in California have been tested for exposure to TB since this investigation began. To date, there is no evidence to suggest that infection has spread from this herd.

Cumulative Since May 13, 2002	
Herds tested	19
Affected herds	1
Animals tested	26,478
Initial TB skin test responders	584
Reactors	99
Suspects	47
Reactors & suspects eliminated	146
Traceouts eliminated	175
Exposed animals eliminated from quarantined herd	347
Average field personnel assigned on a daily basis	22

## Background

In May 2002, bovine TB was confirmed in a Tulare County dairy herd. The CDFA, USDA and the industry established a task force and worked together with the herd owner and his veterinarian to control and eradicate the disease from the herd. The work is ongoing.

The California Department of Health Services and Tulare County Health Department representatives addressed public health issues and coordinated TB testing for the dairy's employees.

## What is California Doing to Eradicate the Disease?

- € The affected herd is under state quarantine. The cattle are tested for TB at two-month intervals and those testing positive are removed from the herd

- € Cattle are only allowed to leave the affected herd to be slaughtered at a USDA inspected facility where enhanced inspection is conducted to ensure they are not infected with TB
- € All cattle sold from or associated with the affected herd over the last five years are being traced and tested
- € Efforts to purchase and slaughter all cattle that left the affected herd are underway
- € Calves from the affected herd are raised away from the adult cattle and are fed only pasteurized products
- € Areas on the affected premises that may be contaminated with TB bacteria are cleaned and disinfected

As a precaution and to protect other states, all dairy breeding animals leaving California that are more than six months of age require a negative TB test within 30 days of movement. At this time, this requirement does not apply to beef cattle.

## Investigation Plans

High-risk herds traced out from the affected herd will be tested by late July 2002. Most heifers traced out of the herd will be slaughtered and examined by late July 2002. The USDA will use the information collected from these trace outs to begin conducting a full review.

It will take several months to complete the process of tracing and testing all possible cattle from the affected herd and the herds they entered.

## Potential Impact for California's TB-free status

California's current bovine TB-free status has not changed at this time. There are various status levels that can be assigned to a state under the USDA tuberculosis eradication program: accredited free, modified accredited advanced, modified accredited, accreditation preparatory or non-accredited.

For California to maintain its accredited-free TB status, the USDA currently requires that the affected herd be depopulated and that CDFA complete a full review showing that there is no evidence of TB spread in California.

If the state is unable to satisfy these requirements, California's status could be changed to a modified accredited-free status which would require that all California breeding cattle have official identification and a negative TB test within 60 days of

interstate movement OR originate from a TB accredited free herd (mandatory annual TB testing) OR move directly to slaughter.

Should more than three infected herds be found in a year, the status could be designated as modified accredited.

If the USDA recommends a change in California's status, it may occur later this year or early next year.

#### **What can producers do?**

Contact your veterinarian who is an excellent source of information on bovine TB. In addition:

- € Practice good biosecurity
- € Follow animal import regulations
- € Know the TB status of the herd where you purchase animals; If you share grazing land with other cattle, know their TB status grazing animals with or adjacent to Mexican-origin cattle is a potential risk for exposure to TB
- € Maintain the permanent identification of your animals and keep records of animal movement into and out of your herd

#### **Public Health**

The risk of people getting bovine TB from animals in the U.S. today is extremely remote. All carcasses are carefully inspected and, if infected, are rejected from the human food chain. The bacterium causing TB is killed when meat is cooked and milk is pasteurized, hence these products are safe to eat. It is also very unlikely that a person would become infected with bovine TB from an infected carcass. People that

drink raw milk from infected cattle, and workers who are in close contact with infected animals are at most risk. People who come in close contact with TB-infected animals are encouraged to take extra precautions, and may wish to contact the Department of Health Services at (916) 327-0332.

#### **CDFA Animal Health Branch Offices**

Sacramento (HQ)	916-654-1447
Modesto	209-491-9350
Ontario	909-947-4462
Redding	530-225-2140
Tulare	559-685-3500

[www.cdfa.ca.gov](http://www.cdfa.ca.gov)

#### **CDFA Milk and Dairy Foods Control Offices**

Stockton	209-466-7186
Oakland	510-622-4810
Fresno	559-445-5506
Ontario	909-923-9929

**United States Department of Agriculture**  
**916-857-6170 or 877-741-3690**



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